



## Alternative Therapies for Gold and White Card holders

### Overview

This Factsheet covers the current policy on alternative therapies under Gold and White Card arrangements, as well as outcomes of a recent review on the policy on alternative therapies.

### What are alternative therapies?

For DVA arrangements, alternative therapies include acupuncture and acupressure, aromatherapy, homeopathy, hypnotherapy and hypnosis, massage or therapeutic touch, meditation, music therapy, reflexology and relation therapy, reiki, tai chi and yoga.

### What is covered by Gold and White Card arrangements?

Gold and White Card holders can access funding for a wide range of medical and allied health services - such as physiotherapy, chiropractics, osteopathy, dietetics and podiatry. Of all alternative therapies, acupuncture and massage are most frequently asked about. These can be funded in the following circumstances:

- massage may be funded if it is delivered during a consultation with a physiotherapist, chiropractor or osteopath. The provider will use his or her clinical judgement to determine whether massage techniques, in conjunction with other treatments, are an appropriate form of treatment for the entitled person. The entitled person needs a referral from their Local Medical Officer, and the health provider must be registered with Medicare Australia.
- acupuncture may be funded if provided by a local medical officer or general practitioner.

Under Gold and White Card arrangements, entitled persons cannot access funding for services offered by any alternative therapy providers, such as masseurs, naturopaths or homeopaths.

### What were the outcomes of the review?

In 2010, the Department reviewed the policy related to alternative therapies for Gold and White Card holders.

As a significant purchaser of health care services, the Department is aware of the role of alternative therapies in Australian health care.

The review considered evidence for alternative therapies; the qualifications and regulation of alternative therapy providers; and how veteran agencies overseas deal with alternative therapies.

## Alternative Therapies for Gold and White Card holders, *continued*

There is emerging evidence (at different levels of quality and strength) about some therapies for some conditions.

However, there is often only limited information available on the evidence for the effects of an alternative therapy; the methodological quality of known reviews and trials tends to be low; and there is often not enough evidence to make recommendations about safety or efficacy of a particular therapy.

As a result of the review, the Department could not be confident that funding alternative therapies by alternative therapy providers under Gold and White Card arrangements would have significant benefits for patients, be cost-effective or be practical to implement at this time.

As a result of this review, this means that Gold and White Card arrangements will continue to not cover alternative therapies provided by alternative therapy providers.

A copy of the review report may be made available upon request.

### Other Factsheets

Other Factsheets related to this topic include:

*HSV01 Veteran - Overview of Health Services available to the Veteran Community*

*HSV13 Chiropractic services – information for the veteran community*

*HSV14 Osteopathic services – information for the veteran community*

*HSV19 Physiotherapy services – information for the veteran community*

*HSV20 Podiatry and medical grade footwear services*

*HSV21 Dietetic services – information for the veteran community*

*HSV60 Using the Repatriation Health Card — For All Conditions (Gold)*

*HSV61 Repatriation Health Card - For Specific Conditions (White)*

### More information

All DVA Factsheets are available from DVA offices, and on the DVA website at [www.dva.gov.au](http://www.dva.gov.au).

You can phone DVA for the cost\* of a local call on 133 254 or free call 1800 555 254 if you are outside a major city.

*Note:*\* Use a normal landline phone if you can. Mobile phone calls may cost you more. Local call rates vary depending on your phone service provider

You can send an email to DVA at: [GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au](mailto:GeneralEnquiries@dva.gov.au).

You can get more help from any DVA office.